



PLANNING COMMISSION

Department of Urban Planning & Design • P.O. Box 27210 • Tucson, AZ 85726-7210

DATE: September 1, 2004

TO: Planning Commission
Albert F. Elias

FROM: Albert F. Elias, Executive Secretary

SUBJECT: *Arcadia – Alamo Area Plan Amendment PA-04-02*
Tucson Medical Center – Campus Redevelopment
Public Hearing (Ward 2/adjacent to Ward 6)

Issue: This is a request by Michael Grassinger of The Planning Center, on behalf of Tucson Medical Center HealthCare (TMC), to amend Subarea 3 of the *Arcadia-Alamo Area Plan* (*Plan* or *AAAP*) to allow higher buildings on the TMC Campus (note: "TMC Campus" and "Campus" used herein refer to the same area). The 116-acre Campus is located west of Craycroft Road between Grant Road and Glenn Street. TMC is proposing to redevelop existing uses and develop new uses as part of a phased, long-term (30 years or more) plan.

Plan policies currently limit building height in the interior of the Campus to 4-5 stories, or about 100 feet. Building heights along the northern edge of Campus, and those on the periphery abutting residential areas are limited to 2 stories. Development on vacant parcels is limited to low-rise, or 40 feet in height.

To enable greater design flexibility, TMC is requesting that the *Plan* be amended to allow buildings up to 200 feet high in the Campus interior, buildings higher than two stories on the northern edge of Campus, and buildings higher than 40 feet on vacant parcels. Higher-intensity development would be concentrated in the Campus interior, and lower-intensity development would extend outward toward the Campus edges. In addition, TMC is requesting specific building setbacks in various locations on the Campus (see Attachment A – Zoning and Land Use Map, Attachment B – Aerial Photograph, and Attachment C – Amendment Application).

Applicant's Request: TMC is requesting to amend the Subarea 3 policies to allow higher buildings to be constructed on the TMC Campus, in accordance with a new Building Height Map. In addition, The Planning Center submitted a new set of recommended policies for the TMC Campus (see Attachment C – Amendment Application, pages 6-13; and the Building Height Map on page 52).

Recommended Action by the Planning Commission: The cutoff point for receiving information from the Applicant's agent that could be addressed in this Communication was Monday, August 23. The Old Fort Lowell Neighborhood Association (OFLNA) will hold a meeting to discuss this proposed amendment on August 25. TMC's consultants will hold

another neighborhood meeting after the September 1 public hearing date. Staff will review information received after August 23, however, it is not part of this Communication (except for the revised Application for this plan amendment, which has been included as Attachment C – Amendment Application). Overall, staff believes that the applicant is making progress on this proposal. However, because additional information concerning this amendment request is anticipated, it is likely that staff will recommend that this public hearing be continued.

Staff's Proposed Policies and Building Height Map: Due to the unique nature of TMC's proposal, staff acknowledges that the more detailed information typically available during the plan amendment process will not be available until the next phase in the planning process, i.e., the rezoning/Planned Area Development (PAD) process. Staff believes that this plan amendment can proceed, and that the AAAP should provide a policy framework that can be used to guide future rezonings/PADs on the TMC Campus. To that end, staff is recommending new policies for AAAP Subarea 3, and a Building Height Map to accompany those policies (see Attachment D- Staff's Proposed Subarea 3 Changes). The recommended policies and maps would replace the existing subsection of the *Plan* in entirety. Staff may modify these policies based on new information and public hearing testimony.

Public Contact: Between January 12 - April 1, 2004, TMC's consultants held eight meetings and had several phone conversations with neighbors and representatives of the surrounding neighborhood associations (Avondale, Old Fort Lowell, Glenn Heights, San Carlos, Vista del Monte, and Harlan Heights).

Following the May 5, 2004 study session, TMC's consultants formed a TMC Community Planning Steering Committee (CPSC) to oversee the plan amendment and rezoning/PAD processes. Invited participants included representatives of nearby neighborhood associations; area businesses; TMC patients, staff and tenants; City of Tucson Wards 2 and 6; and the City of Tucson Planning Commission. A total of seven or more CPSC meetings are planned between June 16 and extending through the fall of 2004. As of August 23, six meetings have been held; another meeting is planned after the September 1 public hearing date.

Items discussed at the meetings are summarized below. Meeting minutes for all neighborhood meetings held by TMC's consultants are provided in Attachment C – the Amendment Application.

On July 29, 2004, five members of the OFLNA met with staff to discuss their concerns (see Attachment E – July 29 Meeting, OFLNA Members). The OFLNA has also scheduled a meeting on August 25 to discuss this amendment.

As of August 24, staff has received over 100 email communications in support of TMC's proposed amendment, many from TMC employees (copies will be provided to the Commission at the September 1 meeting).

Neighbors' Concerns and Issues

- Comprehensive plan needed for entire Campus (not just Phases 1&2)
- Building height and appearance
- Traffic impacts on surrounding area
- Increased traffic on Glenn Street
- Improving internal Campus circulation for vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle traffic
- Location of and approach to helicopter pad
- Emergency vehicle traffic and noise
- Onsite parking
- More parking for employees
- Traffic problems at Whitmore Elementary School
- Vacant parcel at northeast corner of Campus
- Overall design compatibility with the surrounding neighborhoods
- Appearance of TMC Campus from streets
- Desire to keep northwest corner of Grant and Craycroft clear of buildings to improve visibility
- Northwest corner of Grant and Craycroft should be an attractive focal point
- Design should include trails along the washes
- Design should reflect both Tucson culture and the character of the Old Fort Lowell Neighborhood
- Include Old Fort Lowell Neighborhood members in the planning and design processes
- Include University of Arizona architecture and landscape architecture students in the planning process
- TMC's business and planning strategies
- Purpose of the planning process

Phonecalls and Emails

As of August 24, two phone calls have been received. One neighbor in the Glenn Heights subdivision expressed opposition to this amendment due to building height, and concern about the proposed location of the parking garage for the medical office building. The other neighbor asked for general information on the proposed amendment. Staff has also received over 100 email communications in support of TMC's proposed amendment, many from TMC employees. Copies will be provided to the Commission at the September 1 meeting.

Planning Commission Study Session: This study session item was first brought before the Planning Commission on May 5, 2004. At that meeting, the Commission declined to set the item for public hearing and requested additional information about TMC's proposal. The study session was continued to June 2, when the Commissioners restated the need for more information. At the request of the applicant's agent, the study session was continued to July 7, 2004.

- need for 200-foot building height
- amount of open space on Campus
- traffic study included only data and no analysis
- major impacts on area traffic and circulation patterns
- uncertainty regarding Phase 3 improvements
- phasing and “trigger points”
- intensification of development on Campus
- some members of OFLNA feel “left out” of process

Specific Items Requested by the Commission at the July 7 Study Session

- justification for the 200-foot building height - applicant submitted additional information (see Attachment C – Amendment Application, pages 22-28)
- a Preliminary Traffic Study - a Preliminary Transportation Report was submitted by Kimley-Horn (July 2004), see Attachment F – Preliminary Transportation Report.
- traffic impacts of the Phase 1 medical office building- see Attachment F, Preliminary Transportation Report
- a “buildout analysis” that shows that TMC is not using the building height to significantly increase overall site density - see Attachment C - Amendment Application, table on page 100
- More information on future site utilization – not addressed
- How much open space will be provided – a revised Building Height Map shows planned park/gateway areas and trails, see Attachment C – Amendment Application

Staff Comments at July 7 Study Session

Staff noted that this amendment request is unusual due to the large amount of development and redevelopment proposed on the Campus, the phasing of development activities over a 50-year time span, and the lack of specific information regarding proposed improvements more than 10 years out in the future. Staff expressed concern about the traffic information that was submitted, and recommended that the study session be continued to allow the applicant time to address those concerns prior to a public hearing. Staff wanted the consultants to identify potential transportation and traffic issues associated with this amendment proposal. Based on staff’s response, the Commission set the public hearing for September, to allow the applicant time to address the issues identified by the Commission and staff.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Existing Zoning and Land Use: TMC Campus. Most of the TMC Campus is zoned O-3. The lot south of Glenn Street and east of and adjacent to the Arcadia-Alamo Wash confluence is being rezoned from R-1 to O-2 for a one-story medical office development. A vacant parcel at the southwest corner of Glenn and Craycroft is zoned R-2 and O-3. East of the wash and south of Glenn Street, the Campus surrounds the Desert Glenn Townhomes (R-2) and Whitmore Elementary School (R-1) (see Attachment A – Zoning and Land Use Map, and Attachment B – Aerial Photograph).

West. The area west of Wyatt Drive and north of Grant Road is zoned O-3 and C-1. Uses include a senior living community, a medical office building, a hotel and two restaurants. Further west are single-family residences and townhomes (R-1), and the Crossroads Festival, a commercial/retail center at the northeast corner of Grant and Swan Roads (C-2). The area west of the Campus and south of Glenn Street is developed with single-family residences in R-1 zoning.

North. North of Glenn Street is the Old Fort Lowell Neighborhood area, the eastern portion of which is the City-designated *Fort Lowell Historic District* (east of Beverly Avenue). Except for some commercial and office uses along Swan Road, the area north of TMC from Glenn Street to Rillito Creek is developed with residential uses. Most of the homes are single-family with a few small apartment complexes and some townhomes. Zoning is a mix of SR, RX-2, R-1 and R-2; and HSR, HRX-2 and HR-1 (where H designates the Historic District).

East. The area east of Craycroft Road and south of Glenn Street is developed with single-family residences (R-1), except for a small apartment complex at the southeast corner of Glenn and Craycroft (R-2), and a commercial/retail center at the northeast corner of Grant and Craycroft (C-1). Fort Lowell Park is northeast of Glenn and Craycroft.

South. The area south of TMC is developed as the TMC Medical Office Park. Although the offices are single-story and the office park has somewhat of a residential appearance, the area is zoned OCR-2, which allows very intensive development. TMC or the TMC Foundation owns most of the land on which the Medical Office Park is developed, but the offices are privately-owned. East of the Medical Office Park on the southwest corner of Grant and Craycroft are 2-story apartments (OCR-2). Townsend Middle School is south of the apartments. West of the Medical Office Park are commercial (C-2) and office uses (O-3); a mobile home park is further west (MH-1).

Policy Direction: Direction is provided by the *General Plan (GP)*, adopted in 2001, and the *Arcadia-Alamo Area Plan*. *GP* policies are long-term, broad-based, and apply to the entire City, whereas *Arcadia-Alamo Area Plan* policies are more narrowly focused and apply only in the *Plan* area.

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General Plan. Policies in the *GP* are intended to promote more livable, sustainable and enduring development. TMC, located in the Mid-City Growth Area, is identified as a medical activity center. It contributes to the health and well-being of southern Arizona residents and visitors, and is recognized as a major employer and a community asset. To more efficiently serve their clientele, activity centers in the Mid-City are evolving to have more modern designs (i.e., El Con Mall, Park Place, and the Williams Center). *GP* Policies for the Mid-City Growth Area promote private reinvestment in activity centers that need to be modernized to maintain their competitiveness.

In some cases, existing buildings can be updated to achieve modernization, while in other cases new buildings may be needed. *GP* policy supports development that makes use of existing facilities, provides for more compact development within the urbanized area, and promotes a more “livable” (less-sprawling) community. Mid-City Growth Area policies also promote rehabilitation of aging commercial nodes, including the demolition of substandard buildings.

Higher-intensity redevelopment of the TMC Campus would impact area traffic. The *GP* supports community-scaled commercial uses at intersections of major arterial streets, subject to traffic safety and congestion issues. The *GP* also promotes development that will facilitate increased use of alternative modes, such as buses, walking, and bicycling.

A key theme of *GP* policy is to ensure that new development is designed compatibly with existing development, especially where adjacent to residential neighborhoods. The scale and intensity of new development must be compatible with adjacent uses, and adequate transitions must be provided such that the intensity of development near the site perimeter is compatible with the surrounding development.

The *GP* also provides policies to guide the design of new development. Major activity centers are community focal points and should be designed as such. Architectural design statements are to be provided at the intersections of major streets, and at other key site locations. Streetscape design should enhance the overall function and visual quality of the street, and promote greater use of sidewalks.

Site design is to be sensitive to the characteristics that provide Tucson’s “unique sense of place”, including architectural building techniques, design and appearance, neighborhood identity and visual character, mountain views, historic structures, and landscaping consistent with that found on the Sonoran desert fringe. Onsite design should enhance the site experience and perception of employees, customers, visitors, service and delivery people, and passers-by.

To promote sustainability of the built environment, the *GP* encourages increased energy efficiency; water conservation; and the provision of healthy, attractive, and abundant urban vegetation. New development and landscaping should incorporate safe-by-design principles. Neighbors’ concerns about new development should be addressed to the extent reasonably practicable.

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To facilitate a more integrated site design, and to allow greater flexibility in both design and implementation, the *GP* encourages the use of special zoning districts (such as a PAD). The PAD process can accommodate phased development based on a master plan.

Arcadia-Alamo Area Plan. The *Plan* was adopted by Mayor and Council in 1992, for an area bounded by Glenn Street on the north, Speedway Boulevard on the south, Wilmot Road on the east, and Swan Road on the west. A small part of the *Plan* area extends northwest of the Grant/Swan intersection. Subarea 3 is the TMC Campus north of Grant Road. The *Old Fort Lowell Neighborhood Plan* area is north of the TMC Campus. Since its adoption in 1992, the *Plan* has not been amended.

The *Plan* identifies several subareas, and each has goals and policies that apply only to that subarea. Goals of Subarea 3, the TMC Campus, are to encourage a wide range of medically-related facilities to locate in the area; to ensure the compatibility of Campus uses with adjacent residential uses; and to ensure safe vehicular and pedestrian access within, to, and from the Campus.

Subarea 3 land use policies are intended to create a transition from higher intensity development (4- to 5-stories) in the interior of Campus and along Grant Road, to lower-intensity development (1- to 2-stories) adjoining residential uses and along the northern edge of Campus. Development on the remaining vacant parcels is to be no higher than 40 feet. If possible, historic structures are to be retained on the property.

Campus circulation policies specify that an orderly internal circulation system be developed to accommodate medical and related services, and that the circulation system be designed to reduce conflict between patient/visitor traffic and maintenance/delivery traffic. Offsite improvements to Grant and Craycroft Roads are to be provided as warranted by new development on the Campus. The number of new access points from Glenn Street to the Campus is to be minimized.

Plan transportation policies require that traffic from high-intensity uses be directed onto major streets, and that the number of access points to new development be limited. Glenn Street is to be preserved as a residentially-developed collector street, and the low- to medium-density residential uses along Glenn Street are to be maintained.

Stormwater management policies specify that recreational paths are to be provided along wash banks, and vegetation is to be enhanced. Also, the appearance of washes is to be improved where the washes cross major streets.

ANALYSIS

TMC's proposal raises several issues that are not currently addressed by *AAAP* policy. To address those issues, as well as neighbor's concerns, and update the *AAAP* to be consistent with the City's *General Plan*, staff has developed new Subarea 3 policies that are intended to replace the existing Subarea 3 policies and guidelines. A summary of the staff's recommended policies follows.

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Land Use Policies: Existing AAAP policies that create an intensity transition from the interior of Campus outward toward the edges is tied to a new Building Height Map, which clarifies what building heights are allowed and where. Policies have been added to require that buildings be located to minimize traffic and visual impacts on the surrounding areas, and that traffic and visual analyses be provided during the rezoning/PAD process to demonstrate compliance. Policies about buffering, compatibility with adjacent uses, and the retention of historic buildings and cultural features have been strengthened.

Transportation and Circulation Policies: Existing AAAP policies for transportation and circulation, and guidelines for onsite parking, have been grouped together under the single heading “Access, Circulation, Transportation and Parking Policies”. A new policy has been added to require that transportation system improvements be designed to mitigate impacts on offsite areas, including but not limited to Glenn Street. The policy requiring that the number of access points to Campus be minimized has been tied to the provision of a comprehensive, Campus-wide traffic study.

Existing policies requiring an improved internal circulation system for all transportation modes have been strengthened; and a new policy has been added to require that a comprehensive, onsite directional signage plan be provided. A new policy has been added to require that sufficient and conveniently-located parking facilities be provided, as demonstrated by parking plans.

Community Design Policies. A new policy section has been added to require that Campus improvements be designed in a manner appropriate to a major medical activity center, which will therefore be a community focal point; and sensitive to Tucson’s geographical and architectural context. Policies addressing the design of buildings, streetscapes, and site features in key areas are provided.

Landscaping, Open Space and Recreation Policies. A new policy section has been added to require that an overall landscape theme be developed for the entire Campus. The onsite circulation systems, including the wash/trail system, signage, and outdoor activity areas are to be integrated into the overall landscape design. The existing AAAP policy requiring the provision of trails along the Arcadia and Alamo Washes has been strengthened.

Sustainability, Public Participation, and Phasing Policies. Three new policy sections have been added to 1) promote sustainable uses and practices on the TMC Campus; 2) require that TMC obtain additional public input, above and beyond that required by City regulations, during the planning and design of Campus improvements; and 3) require that comprehensive transportation/traffic, visual, and unified site analyses be provided for Phase 3 improvements.

Summary: TMC is applying for a plan amendment to allow the Campus layout to be reconfigured, which will permit a more modern and efficient facility. New Campus improvements need to be respectful of and compatible with the surrounding areas, and potential adverse impacts need to be minimized to the greatest extent reasonably practicable.

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The process to refine this amendment proposal has been evolving. The purpose of this amendment is to set the framework for the rezoning/PAD process, if the plan amendment is approved. The proposed new policies, which are summarized above, provide that framework, and adequately address the key issues raised by this request.

The policies in the *GP* and *Arcadia-Alamo Area Plan* support the redevelopment and intensification of the TMC Campus. TMC is identified by the *GP* as a medical activity center. It is recognized as a major employer and a community asset. *GP* policy promotes private reinvestment in Mid-City activity centers that need to be modernized to maintain their competitiveness, like TMC. In addition, the Campus is located at the intersection of two major arterial streets, which is the optimal location for intense development like the proposed hospital facility.

The proposed development would be allowed by new policies proposed by staff to address compatibility with the surrounding areas, including the location, scale, and height of proposed structures. The most intense activities on the site are located towards the Campus interior. More detailed design elements that will contribute to site compatibility can be incorporated as conditions of rezoning during the rezoning/PAD process. The proposed policies also require that traffic impacts on offsite areas be mitigated; and that vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle access to/from and within the Campus be improved. Vehicular access between Glenn Street and interior Campus areas is to be minimized.

Conclusion: The policies proposed by staff establish an envelope for allowed development. The rezoning/PAD case that follows this amendment will provide additional refinement of the site design. Given the evolving nature of this request, it may be appropriate to continue this public hearing to allow further neighborhood and community input. Staff will continue to review additional information provided, and will share it with the Commission at the September 1 public hearing.

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Attachments:

Attachment A – Zoning and Land Use Map

Attachment B – Aerial Photograph

Attachment C – Amendment Application

Attachment D – Staff's Proposed Subarea 3 Changes

Attachment E – July 29 Meeting, OFLNA Members

Attachment F – Preliminary Transportation Report